

1416
COMMON SENSE,

IN

VINDICATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY

THE

MARQUIS of BUCKINGHAM,

His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State
DURING HIS GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND,

RESPECTED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL of BELLAMONT.

BY A CANDID INQUIRY.

DUBLIN:

WILLIAM M. GRANTLEY, Printer, Fleet Street.

1794.

COMMON SENSE

INDICATION OF THE EXISTENCE

MARKS OF KINGDOM



DEPOSITED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

TABLE OF RICHAMONT

BY A CANNON ENGINEER

DUBLIN

PRINTED BY M. GRANTLEY, No. 10, THE LANE

W. L. L. L.

TO THE
 RIGHT HONOURABLE

EARL OF BELLAMONT.

MY LORD,

YOUR inflexible loyalty on the late alarming crisis has added to that splendor of character, which your talents, as a statesman, had before acquired. When party violence had unhinged the government, and when the diadem seemed to tottered upon the head of our Sovereign, your Lordship stood forward to repel the one and to uphold the other. Your virtuous exertions caused innovation to

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pause

~~pause in her mad career, and resorted~~
 that dangerous measure, a Regency, until
 Providence had ~~restored~~ the faculties of
 body and mind to our most gracious So-
 veraign, thereby rescuing the King's nation
 from indelible odium, and preventing
 that anarchy and ill-blood which other-
 wise must have inevitably taken place.
 The temptations of interest could not
 banish from your Lordship's heart the
 sensations of gratitude, and while others
 were employed in paying their devotions
 to the *rising sun*—you manifested the sin-
 cerest and most unequivocal proofs of
 attachment and affection to your King—
 of regard to the constitution, and un-
 biassed attention to the interests of
all. Permit me, then, my Lord, to
 submit the following pages to your Lord-
 ship's consideration, as they essentially
 concern the measures in which your
 Lordship took so active a part during the
 present

present sessions; their object is to expose the obloquy which has undeservedly been affixed to the character of as upright and as honest a Chief Governor as ever this country was blessed with; in this I will venture to assure myself of your Lordship's approbation—and

With every sentiment of respect,

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's humble

Obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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COMMON SENSE,

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~~who~~ **MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM**

disturbed by interest—and who are certainly

under the domination of some passion which

presses upon the heart and governs the head.

We regret, while we mention that in questions

To ascertain the true character of men

in elevated stations is of much importance

Posterity, not less than the living genera-

tion, participates in the advantages result-

ing from free enquiry. The difference is

but trivial, between those possessed of a

judgment unexercised, and those whose

intellects are clouded by ignorance. But
 indolence is predominant in the human
 composition. Genius is too often shack-
 led by inertia. The various avocations of
 life are ever more operative than matters
 of research or speculation; these circum-
 stances prevent the generality of mankind
 from forming an estimate for themselves—
 and hence the mass of citizens relies not
 upon the exercise of faculties bestowed on
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 biaised by interest—and who are certainly
 under the dominion of some passion which
 presses upon the heart and governs the head.
 We regret, while we mention, that in questions
 of political disputation, candour or sincerity
 is rarely to be found. The fountain stained
 —every stream that issues from it betrays
 the discoloured tinge of its source—thus in
 productions of this nature, which originate
 in party—the visible footsteps of their pa-
 rent

rent are to be traced in every page—and in every line. Should we be surprised, then, if popular opinion is, in two many instances, erroneous? When they resign their judgment to those who of all others are most interested in their delusion, is it to be wondered at, that the public are the dupes of art and imposition? Certainly not.

I am led to these reflexions by the extraordinary transition of the public mind, which threatened for a time to take place—so far as concerns the conduct and character of the Marquis of Buckingham. Without the incentive of reward—or the apprehension of punishment—as a man who has nothing to expect—and nothing to lose—one whom the smiles of power do not charm—and whom its frowns do not intimidate, I enter upon the task of impressing my countrymen with a just sense of the Marquis and his administration. The undertaking is voluntary—and it shall be impartial. I do solemnly

profess the most perfect exemption from pre-
dilection on one hand, and animosity on
the other. My sincere solicitude is, to
ASCERTAIN THE TRUTH.

If it shall be asked, why I entered upon this
undertaking? What hidden treasures of in-
formation I have yet to disclose? I shall only
answer that a love of my country—and a
regard for truth are my motives; that I
possess no secret knowledge—and pretend to
nothing more than an acquaintance with
public facts, and the habit of common ob-
servation.—The character of the nation is
most certainly at stake in the eyes of the
world, if it waver without cause—if its opinion
be changeable as the winds—and if it con-
demns where it ought to applaud. When we
behold the people abandon their own reason
—and adopt the principles set forward by
party—distracted by a confusion of ideas—
and disgraced by a variety of conduct—is it
not incumbent on some impartial man to speak
out—and by a fair statement—restore them to
that

that rectitude—which is as much their honour
as inconsistency is their disgrace?

But to enter at once upon the theatre of
our disquisition—let us revert to the era of
the Marquis of Buckingham's first appoint-
ment to the government of this kingdom.
Let us proceed dispassionately, and follow him,
step by step, through all the measures of his
respective administrations—down to the pre-
sent day—"nothing extenuate, nor set down
"aught in malice."

We find Earl Temple assume the Irish
government with a popularity of character
which eclipsed the fame of his most illustri-
ous predecessors. An union, which the
dictum of politicians had pronounced im-
practicable, took place—it was a cordial union
of sentiment between the Irish viceroy and
the

the Irish people. The ties of consanguinity were considered to have strengthened his natural propensity to serve this country; the warm and generous souls of Irishmen poured forth the effusions of sensibility and joy on the auspicious occasion—and the Chief Governor seemed zealous to realize the expectations of the people. From the country gratulation—from the court profession—confidence was reciprocal.

By a succession of acts—substantially beneficial to the country—Earl Temple proved beyond the possibility of doubt that his professions were not calculated to amuse—but to benefit—that the confidence reposed in him was not misplaced—and the brightest prospect Ireland ever beheld was now opened to her view. Whatever steps had hitherto been taken to exonerate Irish freedom from British controul—the great work of emancipation was not yet complete. The final explanation was yet abroad; on this remaining ground might Britain erect a battery-

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to recover the dominion which she had lost, whenever circumstances should favour the enterprize. It was humiliating to Irish pride—and derogatory to Irish independence—to suffer this great question to rest for a moment upon the precarious tenure of construction—

The subject was all-inclusive; it went at once to the judicial—legislative and commercial rights of Ireland. The Marquis of Buckingham did not shrink from the question—nor did he meet it with coldness. With a manly promptitude which enhances the merit of the act—he avowed, that it was a mockery to say that the rights of Ireland were restored so long as her title lay unrecognized by England—and he demanded its acknowledgment as the absolute right of Ireland. Under his auspices, then, was this great stamp and recognition of our independence obtained—and while Irish hearts have a pulsation for gratitude—they will hold in gene-

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rous remembrance Earl Temple—and the perfection of their constitution.

It is the policy of party Malevolence to detract from a merit which it cannot positively deny. Thus we are told that it is not to the Marquis of Buckingham, alone, we are to ascribe this attainment of our independence—but conjointly with the public—he it is so. It cannot be denied THAT THE COMPLETION OF IT WAS EFFECTED BY HIM and this being admitted by all parties—the invidious insinuation falls to the ground.

The people, perpetual victims of those who aspired to the high offices of the State—harassed by continual plunder—despaired of retribution. Defaulters were certain of impunity—and public works were the sanction of public robbery. On his arrival the Marquis of Buckingham opposed himself to this torrent of abuse which ultimately threatened a bankruptcy of the nation. He did not sit down like an indolent commander, content to give orders,

orders, and leave the labour of enforcing obedience to his inferiors. No! He descended from his high station; he had himself the head to plan—and the hand to execute—his industry kept pace with his honesty—he penetrated the recesses of delinquency—and arrested Peculation with her hand in the public coffers—he set in motion laws coercing her to remunerate the public which she had robbed; a vigilant scrutiny was instituted in every department of the state—and if jobbing—which had been the curse and scourge of the land—was not extinguished—the nation, certain of its being discountenanced, had nothing to apprehend from its rage.

Activity now became the characteristic of the court, and the government, seemed reformed with the constitution. I should mention, that among the many abuses which Time had sanctioned was the asylum which the Castle and its purches had afforded the unprincipled debtor, to the injury of the fair creditor; this did not escape his observance;

feeling that true dignity consisted in the distribution of equal justice, he abolished this connivance at fraud, and withdrew the protection of prerogative which until then had been opposed to the operation of law.

To follow Earl Temple through every minute act of his administration is not my intent—but to overlook one instance of regard to though it may be considered unconnected with politics, would be a culpable omission, for which carelessness, in the eye of candour, would be a bad apology. I mean the institution of the order of St. Patrick. It was grateful to Irish pride, and conducive to Irish consequence; it marked the generous eagerness of a man to seize every opportunity of aggrandizing the country he was appointed to govern. In thus opening the fountain of honours an incentive was held out to merit at home—and the character of the nation was heightened abroad; the people esteemed it as a token of respect to the nation conferred in the persons of its nobility—and it met with that sincere

sincere applause, which, a measure having no other motive but patriotism—taught even experience.

We arrive now at that period when the convulsed politics of the times abruptly recalled Earl Temple from the government of Ireland. What were the feelings of the nation? those of unfeigned sorrow and heart-felt regret. But one opinion was entertained of his Lordship—he was esteemed an amiable private and an incorruptible public character—he was esteemed more—he was viewed as a man who was determined to give purity to system, and economy to its administration. Addresses from all parts of the kingdom expressed, with a sincerity seldom to be found in the language of compliment, the deep regret his approaching departure occasioned; county meetings—grand juries—city corporations—there was a concurrence of all ranks and orders in the state deploring the recall of the Marquis as a misfortune to Ireland. In the short space of his government, he effected more substantial

tial advantage—and acquired a greater portion of popularity than the most assiduous of his predecessors. Behold him at the water side—escorted by the volunteer army—anxious to exhibit that last testimony of their affection! so perfect a coincidence between the Viceroy and the people never before occurred in Ireland.

Thus far the most rancorous opposer of the Marquis of Buckingham will accompany me; he will meet my ideas so far as we have proceeded. We are now to enter upon the scrutiny which is to determine the Marquis's merits or demerits. We are to enquire by what misdeed has Lord Buckingham tarnished the lustre of that character which Earl Temple was so successful in acquiring; let us proceed dispassionately and with caution, unbiassed by prejudice, and unanoyed by the clamours of ignorance. The

The Marquis of Buckingham returns to the government. The same prudential system was the rule of his conduct. A similar zeal for the prosperity of Ireland, for the good husbandry of the public money, and for order in the several departments of the state were the basis upon which he claimed to found his administration. He meets a parliament, and overawed by the unequivocal sense of the public, those who were in the habit of combating the measures of administration were silent. Was it that they possessed not the inclination?—No; but that they wanted a colourable excuse:—To oppose a popular Viceroy, and to say that they spoke the sentiments of the people, would have been too gross an imposition. We beheld a phenomenon in politics; a government without opposition! our great men, who were hostile to the former administration, and strangers at the court, visited the Castle, and attended the levees. Were the patronage of the crown sufficient to gratify those who expect to participate of its bounty, it is not impossible that this harmony would have continued

continued until this day; but the patronage of Ireland is insufficient to embrace *all*, and therefore *some* must be excluded. Still however it was hazardous to declare war against the Buckingham administration. The leading orators avowed that they would hold themselves unpledged, and watch with a jealous eye the new administration, until they should be enabled from its measures to ascertain its merits.

It may be prudent as we proceed to come to every possible explanation that can throw light upon the subject. Those who are not intimately acquainted with the constitution of domestic politics will naturally ask, could not the leading men of opposition have obtained places under the Buckingham administration, for themselves or their followers? what motives then but principle could they have had for going into opposition?—To the first question, which comprehends both, I reply, that they probably might have obtained places, but that they certainly could not accept

cept of them without a desertion of their principals. Bound to each other by the most active of human ties, self-interest, they are pledged to stand or fall together.

The Irish government derives from the Pitt interest, the Irish opposition from the Portland; like two contrarieties in nature, they could never be brought to coalesce. Hence the reader will perceive, that at all events the Marquis of Buckingham was to have expected opposition. The measure of resistance was concerted from the moment of his appointment; but the manner of giving it, the preparation of the public mind for what, if abruptly advanced, must be offensive in a high degree, were left to the caution of the partizans, to time, and incident.

But to return. The leaders of the concerted opposition promised to watch with a jealous eye over the new administration, until they should be enabled by its measures to ascertain its merits; and they might have watched with every

every impulse of personal resentment, and all the energy of public principle to the present hour, ere they would have discovered any measure repugnant to Irish freedom, injurious to the constitution, restrictive of our trade, profuse of our money, or hurtful to our manufactures or agriculture. In vain, I say, might they have kept their patriot vigils over Lord Buckingham's administration to the present hour, and without being able to make an important discovery of this nature, which alone can justify hostility to government on the grounds of justice and reason: opposition founded upon other motives, prevalent as it is, and familiar as it may have become, is faction, to which by the very nature of our constitution we are peculiarly incident; it is setting up the privilege of the constitution to the defeat of its own regulations, while private passion is disguised under the amiable and alluring mask of patriotism.

Finding

Finding that the Marquis made a temperate use of his power, the plan was to coerce government and to obtrude abstract questions upon Parliament, calculated to amuse the populace, and to catch the vulgar. These questions, without qualification, no Irish government can accede to, and the idea was to give the odium of their rejection to the Viceroy. These weapons, these identical weapons which had been employed with some success against the former administration, were to be now sharpened, and brought into the field against Lord Buckingham. The people were elated with the visionary idea that their most extravagant desires would be gratified, in order to inflame them the more by disappointment; an abolition of the hearth-tax, a limitation of the pension-list, an abrogation or commutation of tythes, the disfranchising of revenue officers, the total annihilation of the police—these were amongst the number of the innovations they were taught to expect.

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But previous to the introduction of these measures, much industry was exerted to depreciate the Marquis of Buckingham's character in the public mind. The arts of misrepresentation were resorted to. Even the virtues of the Marquis were detrired as vices. The economy, which he so laudably and so assiduously laboured to introduce into the different departments of the state, was represented as the effects of a narrow spirit, and unworthy a great soul; and there were not wanting men to scoff at what they ought to admire.

Let us now examine the objections to the administration of Lord Buckingham by the criterion of candour and justice; let us determine whether his conduct has been such as would justify the people in withdrawing that esteem, which had been extorted from them by gratitude, were they not generously inclined to bestow it.

I will meet every objection in which Lord Buckingham's administration has been represented as not acting up to what the public had been taught to expect; these are

A refusal to abolish the hearth-tax.

A refusal to limit the amount of pensions.

A refusal to new-model the tythe-system, and alter the present mode of clerical support.

A refusal to abolish the police establishment.

A refusal to disfranchise revenue officers.

They comprehend every imputed objection—save that of refusing to transmit the address of the Lords and Commons to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, requesting him to take upon him the government of Ireland. Of that circumstance I mean to speak separately.

Before

Before a charge of disinclination to serve the country can be proved against Lord Buckingham, he must be admitted to possess an option as to the measure and a power of controul over the two Houses of Parliament. In one of the above instances he possessed no option, and in another he was destitute of controul. To begin with the pension list—which is the most popular question. It is said, that this is one case in which the Marquis has forfeited the esteem of Ireland; but the assertion contains more art than argument. It is a political flourish, which is calculated rather to amuse than convince. Every man will acknowledge that the Marquis of Buckingham in accepting the office of Viceroy, is bound to preserve the prerogatives of the crown entire and undiminished; that the right of granting pensions is one of the valuable prerogatives of the crown; and that were the Marquis, by private influence, or public support, to have given sanction to its restriction, *at a moment when the suddenness of the attempt precluded all communication upon the subject*, he would have exposed himself

himself to the charge of having accepted a trust in order to betray; thus, directing the royal strength to the destruction of a royal prerogative, adding DISRESPECT to diminution? regard being had to the time and circumstance in which the measure was brought forward.*

After this undeniable statement, I might ask, who is so callous to conviction as to say, that Lord Buckingham deserves the reproach which malice would heap upon his fame? I might infer that the man who did must either resign his judgment or abandon his character.

Candid Irishmen will easily see through that little Policy, which artfully endeavours to transfer all the odium of politics to the Viceroy; perceiving objects of popularity and impossibility brought forward, we may regret the difficulty of reducing them to practice,—but we can never censure a nobleman for acting up to those principles of honour—which it is our pride to avow and profess.

I have

* The Treasury was at this moment thrown open to the Prince of Wales without reserve.

I have purposely avoided entering into the abstract question, which concerns the legality or illegality of granting pensions. It is sufficient in vindication of Lord Buckingham, for me, to say, that the Crown has always considered it a prerogative, that this prerogative has always been exercised, that no lawyer of eminence save the late Mr. Fitzgibbon controverted this opinion—and against his authority were all the crown lawyers, and a majority of the House of Commons.

Not more than the legality do I wish to investigate the policy of pensions; but I have heard it asked with much force—Is the veteran who has grown grey in the service of his country to have his toils and his scars only for his recompence against poverty and contempt?—Are the springs of charity to be choaked up, while the widow and the orphan thirst and hunger?—Is genius—is valour—is ingenuity—to be referred to its own reward? Should we place a splendid crown on our Sovereign's head, and a barren scepter in his hand?

hand? These questions I have never heard satisfactorily answered, and certainly, if the surest way to create merit is to reward it, pensions within a certain limitation are laudable.

I appeal to the candid reader, if we have not now fairly got rid of this objection? and I am here to observe, from the authority of what passed in the House of Commons, that Lord Buckingham has not added to that list—and did upon that occasion renew his declaration of persevering in that line of conduct.* The next, most formidable, is a refusal to alter the mode of clerical support. On this ground a battery has been erected to play against the popularity of Lord Buckingham. In one word this may be answered. The Viceroy, whatever his inclination might be, of which I profess a total ignorance, did not in this case

* If the reader demands further satisfaction I refer him to the bill itself—he will there find, that by the terms of the bill, Ireland was to have taken on a perpetual charge of 80,000l. per ann. over and above the respective provisions for the Royal Family, and I leave him to form his own conclusions.

case possess that influence with both houses of parliament which is in many occasions supposed to reside in Viceroy's. The clergy of Ireland have numerous friends and relatives in both Houses. In the Lords the weight of the spiritual bench, added to their connections, must certainly give them a majority; how absurd then, how unwise and insincere of the Marquis of Buckingham would it have been, to have countenanced a reform, conscious that he was unable to give it operation?

It is clear the question never was proposed except when his administration was in infancy or anarchy. When it was in infancy, it is ridiculous to suppose that a residence of a few months could have qualified him for entering upon the prodigious undertaking of abrogating the tythe system, which has obtained as long as the history of this country, and for substituting in its room a novel plan for the maintenance of the clergy; to prove this we need only revert to the incongruous mass which

was endeavoured to be obtruded upon mankind. While disorder prevailed in the administration—would it not be madness beyond dispute to enter upon so arduous a reform?

The deplorable state of our peasantry is the grand argument for [a commutation of tythes. In glowing descriptions heightened by art, and embellished by poetry, their sufferings and their oppression have been held up for public commiseration. But our orators and our writers ought to have reflected on the consequences of such productions. If the seeds of discontent are sown in the kingdom, we must expect to reap the harvest of rebellion; and it will be fortunate if the pathetic tales of domestic woe which are related of every cabin in Ireland do not induce a credulous people to believe that all those distresses which their superiors so warmly describe, are wantonly imposed upon them. Man, by his constitution, is prone to violence and the nearer he is to a state of nature, the easier it is to provoke him to turbulence. Where then is the policy—where the utility, of telling a numerous Irish peasantry, that

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they are the most harassed, the most unfortunate, and most persecuted race of men on earth? You may calculate a peasant's income, you may number his family, and you may put in the contrary scale so much for tythes, so much for rent, so much for seed, so much for sustenance, and in the triumph of a speculatist you may exclaim, that he labours in the very gulph of oppression! To all this I shall only reply—

Civil society cannot exist without a gradation of classes; the earth will not bring forth without labour; the superiour must be supported by the toil of those beneath him; poverty must be the portion of the lower orders in every state;—cease then to excite regrets, until you give proof of abilities to relieve them by producing a system worthy the attention of the public. *

A refusal

* Far be it from my intention to insinuate that the state of the peasantry, particularly in the Southern and Western provinces do not elaim, or ought not to receive improvement. But if we seriously wish to obviate deep rooted errors—the moment of angry political contention is not a time to enter upon this arduous undertaking—nor should the attempt originate in passion or precipitation.

A refusal to remit the tax upon houses that have but one hearth is another theme upon which opprobrium has been laid against Lord Buckingham's administration. Let us examine the nature of this proposal. The hearth-tax is one great source of revenue to the state; it produces annually more than one hundred thousand pounds; every shilling accruing from it is appropriated to particular purposes; now the greater part of the aggregate sum arises from dwellings containing but one hearth. What then was the proposal? simply this—"Abolish a great and productive tax—leave in consequence a deficiency in the provision for your establishments—we offer you no substitute to reimburse the revenue, that must be your own care—be ours the glory of easing the subject, be your's the odium and disgrace of adding to his burden by new-invented taxes, and unpopular imposts."—Could it be expected that the best inclined administration would accede to so enormous a request? By no means. View then, my countrymen, the question

question in its true colours; recognise it as a party stratagem, which under pretence of assisting the cottage, was calculated to harass the administration, and to raise a temple to mock patriotism on the ruins of a worthy minister's fame.

An idea, it is true, was started, but no proposal followed—that the tax upon houses with one hearth should be remitted, and the deficiency be supplied by an increase upon those possessed of a plurality. And alive to humanity, the advocates of the poor inconsiderately censured the Buckingham administration, for not assenting to what had never been proposed. I speak now to the body of men, whose shoulders this plan of reformation had decreed to bear the load of their inferiors. I will ask them what they would have thought of the Marquis of Buckingham—if burthened as manufacturers necessarily are with taxes, and clogged with imposts—he had precipitately increased the weight under which they labour, by partially transferring to them the payments which are

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at this day made by the peasant?—How would the commercial world have received such an act?—I venture to anticipate that it would not raise his character in their estimation. Before such a transfer could be seriously entered upon, which to exonerate one body of men from a grievance, obligates another to take it upon themselves,—those who were to confer the favour, should advertise government of their resignation to abide its consequences. This never was done. What now becomes of the clamour which a resistance to this measure was deemed sufficient to excite?

Those objects which, at a distance, spectre-like, impart unfavourable impressions—on nearer approach we find perfectly innocent, nay worthy our admiration. But two other objections remain to be discussed, before we arrive at that act which drew down on his Lordship the denunciations of Parliament; and these we shall treat briefly as possible.

Appropria-

A proposal to abolish the city police, was resisted by the Buckingham administration.—I am not competent to decide whether this body be or be not deservedly unpopular—not whether the city might not be protected at less cost: but instead of coming forward to reduce its expences, to prosecute its excesses, or to punish its delinquencies, the demand was to procure its utter annihilation. Was there not more passion than reason in this requisition?—Was it not more like the fever of resentment, than the sobriety of deliberation?—It never can be the interest of any administration to suffer abuses to be committed under colour of official authority—or to permit the sword of civil justice to be directed to the annoyance of the subject. Let us then seek to punish the offences of the individuals who compose this institution;—but let us not proceed to abrogate the institution itself. If salaries are profuse—let us petition for their curtailment;—it cannot be denied that Lord Buckingham expressed his readiness effectually to meet the wishes of the public. An effectual protection
there

there must be, and it must be duly observed, unless we wish the metropolis to revert to that state of anarchy and destitution, from which it has emerged—when a handful of abetted handitti were strong enough on every trivial occasion to repel the civil protection of the second city of the British empire—and leave your judges—your senators—your citizens—to become the victims of ruffian force, or the debtors of ruffian clemency.

To deprive revenue officers of the right of suffrage would be a dangerous precedent, and might ultimately subvert that liberty which the precaution was intended to preserve. Who could divine what body of men the caprice of reform might next select for proscription? Diminish the number of electors, already too small, and the infection of example will be caught by your successors; they will improve upon your regulation, and the ground of your freedom, which is the right of the people to return the commons, will be narrowed with the basis upon which it stands.

But

But on the face of the proposal there was suspicion; at a moment when the liberality of the times lamented that the right of suffrage could not be extended to every fellow subject, without distinction what but political intrigue could advise the exclusion of our Protestant brethren, for no other offence than having accepted a trust from their King? their honour and emolument, as subjects, were to be converted into their disgrace and incapacity as electors! a gross solecism! repugnant to sound sense, and hostile to natural justice. The parents of this chimerical scheme ought to have known that Parliament were incompetent to the requisition; it may enact laws for securing our liberties, but in the plenitude of its power it cannot dispense with the fundamental principles of the constitution; it cannot annihilate the provisions of the Great Charter, one of which is, that no subject shall be disfranchised unless convicted of criminality, *which cancels the right itself.*

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I am aware that an act of this nature has passed in the sister kingdom; but the motive upon which it was brought forward—and the means by which it was effected are too notorious to need statement; I shall only observe, that we shall scorn to imitate the defects of Britain, by committing a legislative outrage under pretence of giving purity to representation.

Thus, we have taken a retrospect of all the charges against Lord Buckingham and his administration, and we appeal to an impartial public, whether there is culpability on the side of his Lordship, or misrepresentation on that of his accusers?

We arrive now at the period when his Lordship becomes committed with Parliament, Government had every prospect of energy and stability in Oct. 1788, until our most gracious Sovereign was afflicted by the most grievous of maladies. His danger became more and more alarming, and the despair of his recovery]

was the signal of desertion from his government. It is not for me to determine upon what motives or principles coalitions were formed between men whose sentiments and actions had hitherto been the most adverse and opposite to each other. Associations were entered into, and if rumour be true, ratified under the hands and seals of one hundred and forty-nine Lords and Commoners; the avowed object of this confederacy was to confer upon the Prince of Wales the executive government—with all the prerogatives—powers and jurisdictions of royalty, or to baffle the Marquis's government, according as the event might fall out.* Resolutions to the purpose passed both Houses of Parliament, and the Marquis of Buckingham was called upon to transmit their address to his Royal Highness. At the instant of this precipitate measure—signs of convalescence were discerned in his Majesty—and

* The tendencies of such a compact, should it obtain into precedent, cannot escape the most superficial observer.

—and Providence,—gave to the best of Sovereigns—a gradual return of strength and health—Even this could not cool the thirst for power—which raged even to madness. The pretensions of assumption they considered as the claims of right—and they had already, in idea, parcelled out amongst themselves all the great offices of the state. Patriotism, in politics, like charity in religion, covers a multitude of sins—it was the sacred name of patriotism which was prostituted to sanction this violent procedure—and the people were intoxicated with the flattering descriptions of their spirit and independence, in creating a regent of their own.—Bound by his oath of office not to assent to any thing injurious to the interests of the crown—bound by the confidence which had been reposed in him by his sovereign of whose high opinion and favour he had repeated proof. Bound by his principles of loyalty and his regard for the constitution—bound by every impulse of reason and by every tie of justice—bound by every thing which can be binding on man, to refuse
the

the requisition, though of the Lords and Commons—the Marquis of Buckingham declined to transmit the address to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, QUALIFYING THE REFUSAL BY STATING THE REASONS WHICH FORBAD HIM TO COMPLY.

Angry resolutions and votes of censure were the consequences—expressed in those terms which hasty disappointment I am sorry to say, sometimes gives a loose to even in parliament. The senate was the degraded theatre of low invective—and groundless calumny, in no sort relevant to the subject, was introduced into debate, in order to poison the public mind. In addition to his demerits the Marquis of Buckingham was accused of selfishness and cruelty; he detects a public officer in the act of peculation; in the sincerity of his contrition the author of his own misfortunes, failed exposure by putting an end to his existence. What cruelty in his Excellency to drive a man to such extremities!—The Marquis bestows a place on a friend,

a man

a man who had deserved highly of his country but who happens to be his brother—this is proof, strong as holy writ, of selfishness!—If does the man deserve a brother or a friend who is either dissatisfied or afraid to reward his merits—but such is the inconsistency of slander—that it endeavours to give the stamp of vice in the Marquis—to an act which would be virtue in any other individual.

With freedom, but not with licentiousness we have followed the Marquis of Buckingham from his first appointment to the government; we have examined with sincerity the unpopular acts imputed to him; by that criterion, let him stand or fall. Let me, then, beseech my countrymen to be more circumspect; too often have they been made the dupes of Faction, under the specious form of

* It is of notoriety that Mr. Grenville who was his Excellency's chief Secretary, did, with unwearied zeal, and unshaken firmness, negotiate the Act of Settlement, with the British Cabinet, and conduct it through the British House of Commons.

